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VolNet

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VolNet

What is it?

The Voluntary Sector Network Support Program (VolNet) is a new federal government program administered by Industry Canada. A part of the government's Connecting Canadians initiative to make Canada the most connected country in the world, VolNet's goal is to offer Internet connectivity, including computer equipment, Internet skills development and support to 10 000 voluntary organizations by March 31, 2001.

VolNet will improve the voluntary sector's access to information technology and to the skills and tools it needs to play a stronger role in Canadian society. VolNet's mission is to enable voluntary organizations to access and use Internet technologies to further their own mission.

Who's involved?

VolNet is a joint undertaking of the federal government and the public, private and voluntary sectors. It is guided by the VolNet National Advisory Committee (VNAC), which comprises voluntary and private sector representatives, and federal government officials. The VolNet program design reflects key recommendations made by VNAC in its report, *Building the Technological Capacity of the Voluntary Sector* (January 1999).

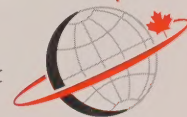
How does it work?

Industry Canada is creating a network of VolNet delivery agencies, which will provide VolNet services to eligible charitable and not-for-profit organizations. Voluntary organizations wanting to take advantage of VolNet's services will apply through these delivery agencies, which will be responsible for identifying eligible VolNet Service Package recipients, assessing their needs, and purchasing goods and services on their behalf. Delivery agencies will also provide ongoing assistance in integrating new technologies into recipients' day-to-day work.

The VolNet Service Package includes three components:

- Internet access and support services — a basic Internet account for one year
- computer equipment needed to connect to the Internet — 50 percent of the cost of the equipment is covered by Industry Canada (up to a maximum specified by VolNet), with the recipient paying the remainder
- basic Internet skills development — basic Internet skills development to get on-line and start using the Internet.

In addition to the VolNet Service Package, VolNet also makes available applied learning opportunities and ongoing support, such as on-line discussion groups, workshops and a volunteer recruitment program to provide technological assistance to voluntary organizations in need.



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Industry Canada is holding an ongoing competition inviting potential delivery agencies to submit proposals. Proposals are submitted to VNAC for review against specific eligibility and evaluation criteria. VNAC then makes recommendations to Industry Canada on which proposals to support.

Industry Canada is seeking organizations or consortiums with a mix of Internet and voluntary sector experience to take on the role of delivery agencies. Delivery agencies may be not-for-profit organizations working in the community Internet field, charities or not-for-profits with Internet project experience, or consortiums that include a not-for-profit organization and a for-profit Internet services company.

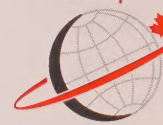
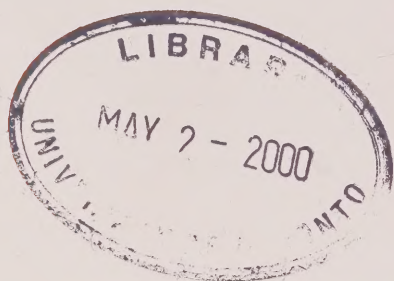
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